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AD NUMBER	
AD395537	
CLASSIFICATION CHANGES	
TO:	unclassified
FROM:	confidential
LIMITATION CHANGES	
TO:	Approved for public release, distribution unlimited
FROM:	Controlling DoD Organization. Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development [Army], Washington, DC 20310
AUTHORITY	
AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980; AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980	

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REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (23 Jan 69) FOR OT UT 68X083

31 January 1969

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Operation MATHEWS, 4th Infantry  
Division, Period 24 May - 12 June 1968 (U)

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2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure that the Army realizes current benefits from lessons learned during recent operations.
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BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*Kenneth G. Wickham*

KENNETH G. WICKHAM  
Major General, USA  
The Adjutant General

1 Incl  
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO San Francisco 96262

AVDDH-GC-P

13 June 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After-Action Report

Commanding General  
4th Infantry Division  
APO San Francisco 96262

1. (U) NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION: Operation MATHEWS. Offensive Operations.
2. (U) DATES OF OPERATION: 242000 May 68 to 121500 June 68.
3. (U) LOCATION: Kontum Province, RVN. Maps, Vietnam, scale: 1/250,000, sheets No 48-4, 48-8, 49-1, 49-5. See Incl 1, Operations Overlay.
4. (U) CONTROL HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, TF MATHEWS.
5. (U) REPORTING OFFICERS:
  - a. BG Don R. Hickman, Commanding General, TF MATHEWS.
  - b. COL Joseph Fix III, Commanding Officer, 1st Bde, 4th Inf Div.
  - c. COL Lawrence L. Mowery, Commanding Officer, 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div.
6. (U) TASK ORGANIZATION: Incl 2.
7. (C) INTELLIGENCE:
  - a. Enemy Situation Prior to Operation MATHEWS.

(1) In late April, Headquarters, NVA 325C Division, with at least two subordinate regiments, moved into the Tri-border area west of BEN HET. It began conducting operations in early May, the most significant being the 10 May attack on C and D/3/8 Inf at FSB #25. Intelligence gained from PW's, ralliers and documents during the first three weeks in May identified the 325C Division and its subordinate regiments, 101D and 95C, with a total strength of at least 6000. In addition, it was learned that the 325C Division probably possessed armaments not previously employed by the NVA in the 4th

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Inclosure 1

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Division AQ; i.e., tanks, 100 and 105mm artillery. It was also determined that the enemy's immediate objective was BDN HET. This situation existed at the time TASK FORCE MATHEWS began operations on May 24th.

(2) Enemy Composition, Disposition and Strength Prior to Operation MATHEWS:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DISPOSITION</u>
325C NVA		
HQ and Support	2200	YB 750300
101D Regt	2150	YB 842286
95C Regt	1800	YB 795195
120th Sapper Bn	250	YB 750300
40th Artillery Regt		
HQ and Support	200	Tri-Border Area
K-33 Bn	300	YB 896179

b. Enemy Activity During Operation MATHEWS

(1) On 25 May 2/C/2/1 Cav made contact on Hwy 512 (YB 903274) with an unidentified enemy unit which attacked from the northwest, resulting in 47 NVA KIA. On 25 May at FSB 29 (YB 939223), A and C/1/8 Inf were attacked from the south, south-southwest and west by elements of the K-4 Bn, 95C Regt, resulting in 149 NVA KIA.

On 27 May reliable intelligence reports indicated the movement of an unidentified NVA division headquarters element into the vicinity of DAK PEK Special Forces Camp. This division was believed to be the 2nd NVA Div, which had overrun two Special Forces Camps just north of the 4th Division AO during the period 9-11 May. It was not known what elements on the division accompanied the headquarters element. TASK FORCE MATHEWS instituted a sustained air strike effort in the area, in conjunction with reconnaissance in force by two battalions of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div. Subsequent reconnaissance and other intelligence indicated that the enemy force had apparently withdrawn temporarily into Laos.

On 30 May on Hill 990 (YB 817248) D/3/12 Inf was attacked from the north, northwest and west by a large enemy force, believed to consist of elements of the K-1 Bn, 101D Regt, resulting in 43 NVA KIA (BC). It was believed that the enemy's casualties were at least three times as high as the body count, but he was able to remove most of them before they could be counted. On 3 June, at YB 798274, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry was attacked from the north, west and south by an estimated enemy battalion. Sweep of the area around the perimeter found 4 NVA KIA (BC) and many parts of bodies and drag marks. Subsequent search of a bunker complex which included a medical facility at YB 7827 revealed 18 additional NVA bodies in shallow graves. This attack was the last offensive action by the 325C

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Div; following it the enemy began a gradual withdrawal toward the border. The 101D Regt is believed to have withdrawn northwest of Hwy 512 into Laos, while the 95C Regt moved southwest of Hwy 512 into Cambodia. On 4 June on Hwy 14N (ZA 20950) a convoy was ambushed by elements of the 4th Bn, 24th Regt. The convoy was relieved by elements of 2/1 Cav, resulting in 39 NVA KIA. Identification of the 4th Bn, 24th Regt in the ambush area by captured documents confirmed the movement of this unit into the area north of KONTUM City near Hwy 14N. The 24th Regt continued to constitute a significant threat to friendly lines of communication in AO MATHEWS between KONTUM City and TAN CANH.

On 10 June DAK PEK Special Forces Camp and B and D/1/22 Inf received intense attacks by fire, in which the enemy employed 60 and 82mm mortar fire, 75mm RR fire, and 122mm rockets. In addition, B/1/22 Inf at YB 910677 received a ground assault with small arms, grenades, and flamethrowers. The attacking force was probably a reinforced company. The size of the unit making the attack, as well as the weapons employed in the ground attack and attacks by fire, indicate that major elements of the 2d NVA Division have probably returned to the DAK PEK area to renew offensive.

(2) Enemy Composition, Disposition and Strength Encountered During Operation MATHEWS:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>DISPOSITION</u>
325C NVA Div		
101D Regt	1430	YB 8124
95C Regt	1425	YB 8322
120th Sapper Bn	125	Both of the above locations
2d NVA Div		
U/I Regt	2000	YB 9167
24th Regt		
4th Bn	350	ZA 2095
5th Bn	375	ZA 1899
40th Arty Regt		
K-33 Bn	300	YB 9216

c. Characteristics of the Area of Operations:

(1) Weather: Almost every day of Operation MATHEWS saw heavy rainfall; normally a light drizzle occurred in the morning, giving way to numerous afternoon rainshowers. Scattered low clouds, bases of 300 to 500 feet, and scattered-to-broken clouds above 1000 feet were experienced during early morning hours. Broken cumulus and scattered cumulonimbus

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and ceilings of 1000 feet (obscuring some peaks) occurred during late afternoons and evenings. Several foggy mornings limited visibility to 3 foggy mornings.

(2) Terrain: The western portion of KONTUM Province from the border to the eastern end of AO MATHAMS is characterized by rugged mountains surrounding a small central basin area. The highest peaks reach over 1400 meters while ranges in the west and south average 1035 meters. Vegetation in the mountainous areas consists of very heavy double to triple canopy forest. The undergrowth in most areas is very thick brush mixed with bamboo. Some of the higher elevations have very light undergrowth. In the mountainous areas, there are scattered out-croppings of mixed large stones and stone cliffs. There are natural stone caves in such areas. Suitable natural landing zones do not exist in the mountainous areas. The central basin area has moderate relief averaging from 650 to 660 meters. Vegetation varies from single canopy heavy forest with very thick undergrowth to scattered low trees with thick grass and mixed brush undergrowth. Lower areas near streams have heavy brush grass. Large stands of bamboo are scattered throughout the basin area. Suitable natural landing zones can be found in some areas. Principal drainage is provided by the DAK POKO River, which flows south through the area. Many smaller tributaries dissect the entire area. Deep ravines are found throughout the mountainous area while rice paddy choked streams meander and criss-cross through the basin area.

(a) Observation and fields of fire: Observation and fields of fire are extremely limited in the mountainous areas due to the very heavy vegetation. Some vantage points, however, do exist which permit observed direct and indirect fire into the low areas. Observation improves in the lower areas and along the DAK POKO Valley where scattered open areas and lighter vegetation offer less restricted fields of fire.

(b) Cover: Good cover is available throughout the mountainous area where many deep ravines, large rocks, heavy forest, and natural caves provide protection from both airstrikes and artillery fire. In the central basin area, cover from indirect fire and airstrikes can only be obtained from bunkers and tunnels.

(c) Concealment: Concealment is excellent in the heavily forested mountainous areas; air observation of ground activity is impossible except in areas where heavy bombing has removed the vegetation. The central basin area provides much less concealment; air observation varies from good in the lightly forested areas to excellent in the open areas.

(d) Obstacles: The majority of the AO, except for the basin area east and south of BEN HET, is characterized by steep (30%) slopes, rain forests, and dense vegetation. In the eastern section of the area, the DAK POKO River presents a formidable barrier to vehicular and foot traffic. The bamboo in

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the area east and south of BEN HET is thick and difficult to traverse. Conditions greatly restrict foot movement to existing roads and/or trail networks and for all practical purposes channelizes vehicular movement to Highway 512.

(e) Key Terrain: In addition to friendly fire bases the following areas are critical:

1. Bridges vic YB 943238 and ZB 156053.
2. High ground vic ZB 0126 and YB 9969.
3. Ridge-high ground vic YB 9222, ZB 0416 and ZB 0011.

(f) Avenues of Approach: The main avenues of approach into the area are provided by Highway 14N, Route 14N, Route 512 from the west, a newly constructed enemy road toward BEN HET from the west, and the DAK SIR and DAK HO'DRAI Valleys from the south. A major trail enters the area from the west vicinity YB 730368. (See Appendix 3).

1. Highway 14N as far north as TANH CANH is an improved, hard-surfaced, two lane dirt road trafficable to wheeled and heavy armored vehicles except from mid-June to late September when the low areas become impassable. North of TANH CANH it is unimproved dirt road, impassable to vehicular traffic.

2. Route 512 enters the AO from the west vicinity YB 7527 and continues to the east through BEN HET and DAK TO to TANH CANH where it meets Highway 14N vicinity YB 063225. This route has generally the same characteristics as 14N, but it is impassable from YB 750270 to YB 802238 due to heavy bombing.

3. A newly constructed enemy road enters the AO from the west vic YB 740219 and connects with Route 512 vicinity YB 803238. The road, constructed by hand labor, is hard-packed dirt and averages four to five meters in width. The road follows terrain contours and has no drainage ditches. Due to heavy bombing the road is impassable from YB 784227 to YB 803238. If repairs are made, this route could provide a high speed armor approach to BEN HET.

4. The river valleys from the south provide excellent avenues of approach for infantry movement. Concealment from aerial observation, however, is lacking in many areas.

(g) Effects of Weather on Terrain: Soil conditions vary from moist and fairly firm in the high mountains to saturated and extremely muddy in the central basin area. Thick vegetation and very slick, steep slopes present a definite impediment to foot and vehicular traffic. Many waterways, especially

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the DAK POKO River due to the swelling caused by the rains and drainage, become unfordable during this period.

d. Attacks by Fire on Friendly Positions by Type.

60mm mortar	10
82mm mortar	42
75mm RP	4
100mm Gun	0
105mm Howitzer	4
122mm Rocket	3
120mm mortar	3

e. Mining Incidents.

Vehicles hit mines	3
Mines discovered	2

f. Captured Enemy Weapons.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Small Arms</u>	<u>Crew Served Weapons</u>
1-8 Inf	41	15
1-22 Inf	3	
3-8 Inf		1
3-12 Inf	65	3
2-1 Cav	22	
1-35 Inf	6	
1-506 Inf (Abn)		
2-506 Inf (Abn)	4	
3-187 Inf (Abn)		
7-17 Air Cav		
	<u>141</u>	<u>19</u>

Total Weapons Captured 160

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## g. Enemy Casualties:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>KIA (Body Count)</u>	<u>CIA</u>
1-8 Inf	149	
1-22 Inf	5	
3-8 Inf	9	3 (2-Returnee)
3-12 Inf	72	3 (1-Returnee)
2-1 Cav	90	1
7-17 Air Cav	5	
1-35 Inf	5	
1-506 Inf (Abn)	0	
2-506 Inf (Abn)	11	
3-187 Inf (Abn)	0	
LRPs	6	
	<u>352</u>	<u>7</u>

## 8. (C) MISSION:

### a. TF MATHEWS was activated to:

(1) Conduct reconnaissance in force operations and locate and destroy enemy forces in AO MATHEWS.

(2) Destroy the 325C NVA Division in accordance with OPORD 11-68, HQs 4th Infantry Division, dtd 24 May 1968.

(3) Protect DAK PEK and BEN HET USGF Camps.

(4) Protect 70 Base Camp.

(5) Secure LLOC within AO MATHEWS.

(6) Be prepared to relieve/reinforce 42D ARVN Regiment.

b. Letter of Instruction to CG, TF MATHEWS is at Inclosure 3.

## 9. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

a. Task Force MATHEWS was formed with 2 brigades in response to the movement of major units of the 325C NVA Division toward BEN HET USGF Camp from the west. To destroy the 325C Division, 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division attacked on D-Day (27 May 68) with simultaneous combat assaults by two battalions to secure objective DIAGON (YB 8731) and objective BAYON (YB 8124). 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division followed at H + 3 hours with a one battalion combat assault to secure objective CARDINAL (YB 8218) southwest of

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BEN HET. One CSF company began reconnaissance in force at H+2 hours from BEN HET west northwest toward Hill 705 (YB 8526) to find and destroy NVA weapons positions and assembly areas. 1st Bde continued the offensive on D+1 with a battalion-size combat assault to secure objective CORBS CREEK (YB 8327).

b. In order to block the TU HONG Valley approach to DAK TO and TAI GANH from the north, 42d ARVN Regiment deployed one battalion by air assault northeast of DAK TO on D-1 (26 May 68). The 23d ARVN Ranger Battalion was deployed beginning D-1 (26 May 68) to secure FSB's along Rte 512 and the high ground north of DAK TO. Convoy routes were secured by armored cavalry units supported by armed helicopters and air cavalry.

c. CSF operations at BEN HET and DAK PAK were coordinated with Task Force operations and were integrated into the overall offensive plan.

d. One battalion, as Task Force reserve, was initially prepared to exploit contacts in either brigade area and/or to secure objective FOSTER (YB 7829) on D+3. 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne was prepared to reinforce DAK SEANG and/or DAK PAK USF Camps should the enemy threat require.

e. All offensive operations were supported by B-52 airstrikes and massive artillery preparations prior to assaults by infantry. Immediate tactical air support, B-52 strikes, and artillery were employed throughout Operation MATHEWS to neutralize enemy weapons and destroy enemy forces by fire and as close support.

f. Inclosure 1, Operations Overlay.

## 10. (C) EXECUTION:

### a. General.

(1) Operation MATHEWS was initiated by Task Force MATHEWS at 243000 May 68 with 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division and 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division under the Command of the Assistant Division Commander, 4th Infantry Division. The area of operations encompassed AO SPAATZ (DAK TO) and AO CH ROKED (DAK PAK) and included BEN HET, DAK SEANG, and DAK PAK USF Camps. 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division closed using C-130 aircraft on 26 May with 3 battalions.

(2) On 27 May (D-Day) 3d Brigade relieved 1st Brigade of responsibility for the AO east of BEN HET. 1st Brigade air assaulted with 2 companies, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry at 1003 hours to secure Objective DIGGS (Hill 900) and with 4 companies, 3d Battalion, 18th Infantry at 1005 hours to secure Objective BAYON (Hill 990). Both objectives were secured with no enemy contact. The command and control aircraft, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry received enemy fire and made a forced landing south of Objective DIGGS. The command group and crew were extracted uninjured and continued support of the assault. At 1200 hrs (H+2), a BEN HET CSF company began a ground assault to secure Hill 705 northwest of BEN HET. At 1240

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hrs, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry under OPCON 3d Brigade, assaulted and secured Obj CARDINAL (Hill 889) with 2 companies without incident. Upon securing initial objectives, 1st Brigade units began conducting reconnaissance in force toward the Cambodian border with a mission to engage and destroy enemy forces. From Objective CARDINAL, 3d Brigade controlled the southwest approach toward BEN HET by conducting extensive reconnaissance and screening operations around Hill 889 and along the approach toward the northeast.

(3) On 28 May 68 (D+1), 1st Brigade continued to attack with a combat assault by 3 companies, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry to secure Objective COBES CREAM and search possible NVA staging or storage areas in the draws west of BEN HET.

(4) Based on the major threat to DAK PEK which developed on D-Day from units of the 2d NVA Div, 3d Brigade deployed on 28 May 68 (D+1) with a Brigade CP, 2d Battalion, 506th Airborne Infantry. 3d Brigade assumed OPCON of AO CHEROKEE with the mission to protect DAK PEK and to destroy 2d NVA Division forces threatening DAK PEK. With the deployment of the remainder of 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry on 29 May, 3d Brigade established control of the high ground control of DAK PEK to the west and north and began a series of airmobile combat assaults to exploit B-52 airstrikes and engage 2d NVA Division forces. Airstrikes, artillery, and positioning of Infantry on key terrain resulted in the enemy forces withdrawing into LAOS. Upon withdrawal of the major enemy forces, 2d Battalion, 506th Airborne Infantry was deployed back to DAK TO on 2 June.

(5) After the enemy attack on the 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry mortar base at Hill 990 on 30 May, A Company, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry reinforced Hill 990 and began extensive sweep operations around the base. 1st Brigade continued to push toward the west with 3 battalions searching the ridges and draws along approaches leading from the west.

(6) 23d ARVN Ranger Battalion and 2d Battalion, 42d ARVN (-), under OPCON 42d ARVN Regiment assumed responsibility for the area north of Rte 512 and east of FSB 25 (YB 8829) beginning 28 May. 42d ARVN Regiment retained responsibility for securing FSB 13 (YB 9125), FSB 3 (YB 9523), FSB 30 (YB 9726), and maintaining one company on the ridge north of DAK TO.

(7) On 1 June 68, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry assaulted with three companies to secure Hill 905 (YB 7921) and block the southwestern escape route from BEN HET, FSB 29, and FSB 15. The battalion conducted reconnaissance in force northwest to Hill 947 (YB 7724) and operated astride a well used NVA route from Cambodia. No enemy contact was made.

(8) On 3 June 68, 2d Battalion, 506th Airborne Infantry, under 1st Brigade control, secured Hill 1043 (YB 3332) with an air assault and began reconnaissance operations northwest to Hill 1191 then southwest to FSB 18 (YB 8531) and west to search the DAK SU Valley approach toward BEN HET. No contact was made with the enemy.

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(9) As the 1st Brigade maneuvered to search the routes and suspected assembly areas between BEN HET and the Cambodian border, it was apparent that the 325C Division had withdrawn from the battle area toward the west. Light contacts with small NVA covering forces were made and several battalion sized bases were secured and contaminated with CS chemical.

(10) The 4th Infantry Division offensive west of POLEI KE-4G required that TF MATHEWS release 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry to 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division on 5 June.

(11) On 8 June 1st Brigade assumed responsibility for AO CH ROK and deployed the 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry to DAK PAK to relieve the 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry. 3d Brigade began deployment out of AO MATHEWS by airlifting the advance party with five C-130 sorties. 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry departed on 9 June with the brigade CP followed on 10 June by 2d Battalion, 506th Airborne Infantry. 1st Brigade resumed responsibility for all of AO SPANZ and completed pursuit operations to within 3 Kms of the border.

(12) Based on intelligence that a battalion of the 325C Division had moved to vic (YB 8513), 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry assaulted 2 companies to YB 8213 and 2 companies, 1st Battalion, 506th Airborne Infantry to FSP 28 on 9 June. All companies, under control of 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, conducted a detailed bomb damage assessment of six B-52 strikes that preceded the combat assault. Although recently used enemy bunkers and positions were located and searched, no contact was made nor were bodies or weapons found.

(13) Early morning on 10 June an attack on DAK PAK by NVA forces began with a battalion sized ground assault supported by mortars and rockets against the 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry FSB'S. The 1st Battalion, 506th Airborne Infantry remained under Task Force control as 3d Brigade (-) departed the AO. 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry reinforced AO CHEROKEE on 10 June and established positions both inside and northwest of DAK PAK Camp. Over the 46 hour period that followed, intense indirect fire attacks were received by friendly installations in AO CHEROKEE. B-52 strikes were employed on enemy positions and again the enemy withdrew to LAOS. Combat assaults followed by reconnaissance and pursuit operations were conducted throughout AO CHEROKEE to discover and defeat any remaining enemy forces.

(14) The threat of DAK PAK, BEN HET, and DAK TO diminished and at 121500 June 68, TF MATHEWS was deactivated and control of tactical operations in the DAK TO and DAK PAK areas reverted to 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

b. Following are the significant contacts during Operation MATHEWS:

DATE	US UNIT(S)	EN UNIT	LOCATION	US LOSSES	EN LOSSES
25 May	B/2-1 Cav	UNIDENT EBT Co (+)	YB892270	3KIA 6WIA	47 NVA KIA
25 May	A,C/1-8 Inf	K-4 Bn 95C Regt	YB839222	14KIA 59WIA	149 NVA KIA

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DATE	US UNIT(S)	EN UNIT	LOCATION	US LOSSES	EN LOSSES
30 May	D/3-12 Inf	K-1 Bn (+) 101D Regt	YB817247	7KIA 56WIA	43 NVA KIA
4 June	C/2-1 Cav	4th Bn 24th Regt	ZA208948	1KIA 8WIA	41 NVA KIA
10 June	B/1-22 Inf	UNIDENT EST BN (*)	YB910677	1KIA 22WIA	43 NVA KIA

C. Implementing FRAG Orders published by HQ, TF MATHews, are at Inclosure 3.

d. Chronological summary of operation is at Inclosure 4.

## 11. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:

a. Non-organic and non-attached supporting forces.

- (1) 7th US Air Force
- (2) 52d Artillery Group
- (3) 52d Combat Aviation Battalion
- (4) 299th Engineer Battalion (C) (-)
- (5) Det, 9th Air Commando Squadron
- (6) Co B, 9th Fsvops Battalion

b. Artillery Support

- (1) General.

(a) The concept of artillery employment was to provide direct artillery support to each maneuver element and to employ the relatively large amount of medium and heavy artillery in reinforcing and general support roles to weight maneuver efforts and to provide artillery support for ARVN operations.

(b) Initially, the 6th Battalion, 29th Artillery was in direct support of the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. Battery C, 4th Battalion, 42d Artillery (105mm T), Battery C, 2d Battalion, 9th Artillery (105mm T), Battery A, 5th Battalion, 16th Artillery (155mm SP), and Batteries A and C, 1st Battalion, 92d Artillery (155mm T) reinforced its fires while Battery D, 5th Battalion, 15th Artillery and Battery B, 6th Battalion, 14th Artillery were in general support. 3d Brigade of the 101st Abn Div deployed to 4th Div control with its direct support artillery, the 2d Battalion, 39th Artillery (105mm T), which arrived on 24 and 25 May. Additional artillery (155mm SP) closed on 26 May and Battery C, 5th Battalion, 22d Artillery (175mm SP) arrived on 28 May.

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(2) DIVARTY established a Division Artillery Tactical Command Post at DAK TO Base on 25 May to coordinate artillery activities in the battle area and to insure maximum effectiveness in the allocation of general support artillery fires.

(3) Artillery units conducted 24 displacements to support tactical operations initially west of DAK TO and then north to DAK PEK.

(4) Extensive use was made of radar. Three (3) AN/MPQ-4A counter-mortar radars were employed in the DAK TO, DAK PEK and BEN HET areas. This aggressive use of Q-4A radars resulted in detection of 48 mortar locations and one 122mm rocket location. One AN/MPQ-10A counterbattery radar was flown into the AO from TUY HOA and transported to a forward fire base by CH-54 on 2 June to counter the threat of enemy artillery detected on 30 May west of DAK TO. The AN/TPS-25 ground surveillance radar organic to Division Artillery was displaced by air to a forward fire base in the DAK TO area. The TPS-25A radar located seven groups of personnel identified as enemy ranging in size from 3-21 personnel. These targets were engaged with artillery.

(5) Meteorological support was furnished continuously throughout the operation.

(6) Maximum use was made of air observation. Division Artillery was augmented daily by aircraft from 52d Artillery Group.

(7) Assigned, attached and operational control units during Operation MATHEWS are as follows:

(a) 6-29 Arty	(105 T)	DS	1st Bde, 4th Div
(b) 2-319 Arty	(105 T)	DS	3d Bde, 101st Abn
(c) C/4-42 Arty	(105 T)	DS	1st Bn, 22d Inf
(d) C/2-9 Arty	(105 T)	DS	1st Bn, 35th Inf
(e) A/5-16 Arty	(155 SP)	GSR	6-29 Arty
(f) C/5-16 Arty	(155 SP)	GSR	6-29 Arty
(g) D/5-16 Arty	(8" SP)	GSR	6-29 Arty
(h) A/1-92 Arty	(155 T)	GSR	6-29 Arty
(i) C/1-92 Arty	(155 T)	GSR	6-29 Arty
(j) B/6-14 Arty	(175 SP)	CB	TF MATHEWS
(k) D/6-14 Arty	(175 SP)	CB	TF MATHEWS



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(8) Summary of ammunition expenditures by caliber.

(a) 105mm 27,037

(b) 155mm 12,966

(c) 8" 1,560

(d) 175mm 4,076  
GRAND TOTAL 45,639

(c) Air Support.

(1) Task Force MATHEWS TACP controlled tactical fighter-bombers and long-range heavy bombers for ground elements of the Task Force.

(2) The existing TACP of 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division was augmented by three Forward Air Controllers, three O-1G aircraft, a radio control 1/4 ton vehicle, and four enlisted men. This composite TACP was the coordinating agency for USAF assets in AO MATHEWS.

(3) Initial organization of the Air Request Net was that all 1st Brigade, 4th Division G3 immediate and preplanned strikes went through normal channels to Division G3 Air at Camp Enari. 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne request immediate strikes from TF TACP at DAK TO who then relayed the request to IFFV and was monitored by Div G3 Air by telephone. Sorties assigned to fill these request were controlled by Forward Air Controllers from 1st and 2d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division because of the performance limitations of the O-1 aircraft assigned to 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne. ALO, 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division provided liaison between the brigade and HQ, TF MATHEWS.

(4) The Air Request Net was modified on 28 May when 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne deployed to DAK PEK. The mobile TACP of 3d Brigade, 101st was air-lifted to DAK PEK and processed immediate requests for tactical operations within AO CHEROKEE. Preplanned missions continued to go directly to Div G3 Air. In addition, radar-guided Combat Sky Spots (CSS) were used to deliver Tac Air Support during inclement weather and for night missions.

(5) All preplanned strikes were backed up with CSS strikes because weather changed rapidly during the operation. These backup missions were often flown instead of cancelling a flight of fighters.

(6) Weather conditions adversely affected Tactical Air Support during Operation MATHEWS. Low cloud ceilings and morning fog associated with the Southwest Monsoon combined to limit FAC missions to the late morning and early afternoon hours on approximately 16 days during the period. A total of 40 preplanned FAC missions were diverted to CSS status because of unfavorable weather conditions in the target area.

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(7) Summary of air support flown is as follows:

(a) Fighter missions-309

(b) Fighter sorties-661

(c) Spooky/Moonshine-8/1

(d) Summary of Damage Assessments-33 bunkers destroyed, 2 foxholes destroyed, 4 active AAA positions destroyed, 1 recoilless rifle position destroyed, 35 NVA KIA (9 BC), 21 secondary explosions, 2 landing zones constructed.

(8) ARCLIGHT STRIKES: Arclight strikes contributed more significantly to the success of Operation MATHEWS than to any previous 4th Infantry Division operation. Employed in mass for the first time in this area of operations and closely coordinated with the scheme of maneuver and other supporting fires, they were a major factor in the attrition of enemy forces. Since employment varied between the DAK TO, BEN HET and DAK PEK areas, they will be described separately.

(a) DAK TO - BEN HET: The concept of operation in this area called for the numerically inferior allied forces to occupy the critical terrain in the area in strength, concentrating the Division Reconnaissance Package in the area to find targets for exploitation of the friendly preponderance of fire power. Once located, targets were attacked by massed fires of all appropriate types, including Arclights. This phase of operations employed 39 Arclight strikes. After massive attrition of the enemy forces, and the arrival of additional maneuver forces in the area, simultaneous air assaults were to be made in the enemy's rear to complete his destruction. These assaults were preceded by a massive five day Arclight, tactical air, and artillery preparation in the area known to be occupied by major elements of 325C NVA Division. During this five day period there were 29 strikes, culminating in five on D-Day on the immediate objectives of the combat assaults. These assaults were made as scheduled, even though on D-Day events in the DAK PEK area required diversion of significant maneuver forces to that area. Although large and determined enemy elements were known to have been present in the objective area prior to the preparation phase, US Forces were able to complete three battalion air assaults into cold landing zones on D-Day without loss of a single US soldier. In operations following the US attack, Arclights continued to be used in mass to complete the exploitation and to neutralize enemy fires. A total of 20 targets were attacked during this period, bringing the total for Operation MATHEWS in this area to 58.

(b) DAK PEK: Arclight strikes were employed in the DAK PEK area to blunt a major enemy thrust at the isolated CSF camp and to provide reaction time for reinforcement of the defense. There were two separate phases of this operation, 23 to 31 May and 11 to 14 June. Task Force MATHEWS reacted to indications from a reliable intelligence source that major enemy forces were threatening the DAK PEK CSF camp. During the earlier period, a total of 11 Arclights were employed, and despite reliable indications of the enemy's presence in the area, no attacks were made on friendly positions, and the enemy apparently withdrew. From 11 to 14 June, after withdrawal of the bulk of the US Forces, the enemy again threatened the camp this time in strength. During this period, 20 Arclight targets were

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struck. Despite indications of a major enemy effort to overrun the camp, he was able to make only one ground attack on friendly positions and ineffective attacks by fire. In this operation, because of comparative lack of artillery support and poor weather conditions for tactical air support, Arclight support was especially significant.

(c) In summary, it is apparent that the mass employment of Arclight strikes played a major role in the decisive defeat of elements of two NVA Divisions in Operation MATHEWS. Although extensive efforts were made to assess bomb damage, no single target strike could be proved to have produced dramatic results. Taken in sum, however, the evidence of their effect is conclusive. The enemy made a major effort during this operation, moving large forces for long distances to mass them against numerically inferior US forces, he introduced more sophisticated weapons systems than had been previously used in the Central Highlands, including artillery, and probably armor. Despite this major effort the enemy achieved not one minor objective, but paid a staggering price in casualties and damage. Friendly casualties were comparatively very light considering the results achieved. The large number of Arclights were massed in a relatively small area where the enemy forces had to assemble to attack their objectives, and they were never able to organize a sustained attack.

d. Army Aviation Support.

(1) Aviation support for Operation MATHEWS was provided by the organic 4th Avn Battalion and the 52d Combat Aviation Battalion. Missions were assigned by the Task Force Aviation Officer to support combat operations.

(2) Task Force MATHEWS employed an average of 24 UH-1hs, 6 UH-1Cs, 6 CH-47s, and 1 CH-54 per day. This represents the normal commitment of two (2) Assault Helicopter Companies and one (1) Assault Support Helicopter company. These aviation resources conducted an average of two (2) combat assaults, one (1) extraction and one (1) secure lift daily.

(3) The following is a summary of operational data and support furnished to TF MATHEWS by the combined assets of the 4th Avn Battalion and the 52d Combat Aviation Battalion.

	<u>UH-1D/H</u>	<u>UH-1C</u>	<u>CH-47</u>	<u>CH-54</u>
(a) Total Hours	2430	599	627	66
(b) Total Series	13499	6101	2003	102
(c) Type Missions:				
CA	6128	6101		
Log	5889		2003	102
C&C	1482			

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(d) Cargo (Tons)	2300	3747	444
(e) PAX	23343	4017	

## e. Engineer Support

(1) Direct support was furnished to the Task Force by Company A, 4th Engineer Battalion and Company B, 326th Engineer Battalion who supported 1st Bde, 4th Infantry Division and 3d Bde, 101st Abn respectively.

(2) Company D, 299th Engineer Battalion, augmented by Headquarters and Headquarters Company 299th Engineer Battalion, provided general support to the Task Force.

(3) Company A 4th Engineer Battalion provided direct support for the infantry and artillery battalions of 1st Brigade, 4th Division performing LZ clearing missions, cleared fields of fire, and provided technical assistance for barrier installation. Also, Company A operated a 1500 gallon-per-hour water purification point at 1st Brigade base camp, and installed and operated a 600 gallon-per-hour unit and BEN HET Special Forces Camp. Daily minesweeps on Hwy 512 were also conducted by Company A. Heavy equipment was airlifted to provide support missions for the TF and a large TOC was built for HQ, TF MATHEWS at DAK TO Base. An emergency ASP/POL storage facility was constructed at DAK SEANG Special Forces Camp to support tactical operations in the DAK PEK area.

(4) Company B, 326th Engineer Battalion provided direct support to the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne, Infantry Battalions and DS Arty Battalion. Major elements of Company B deployed with the brigade to DAK PEK, where the company constructed fire support bases, as well as berms for three POL storage areas and three ammunition points. In addition, a 1500 gallon-per-hour water purification unit was installed and operated at 3d Brigade Base Camp and a 600 gallon-per-hour unit at DAK PEK.

(5) Company D and Headquarters Company, 299th Engineer Battalion (Combat) provided general support to both brigades and to the Task Force. Priority was given initially to construction of a base camp for the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne, consisting of a brigade TOC and Artillery TOC, four helipads using M&I matting, two helicopter revetments, establishing drainage control, dozing out offensive positions, clearing fields of fire and providing technical assistance for the establishment of a tactical wire barrier system. Also, elements of Company D assisted 4th Engineers to conduct minesweeps on Hwy 512. A 1500 gallon-per-hour water point was operated at DAK TO Base in support of the Task Force.

## f. Signal Support

(1) The 124th Signal Battalion provided communications support for Operation MATHEWS, and established communications with the following major units:

(a) 4th Inf Div Main

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- (b) 1st Bde, 4th Inf Div
- (c) 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div (modified area signal center)
- (d) 4th Inf Div DIVARTY (TAC)

(2) Multichannel VHF systems were activated on 25 May from 4th Infantry Division Base Camp to the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division at DAK TO I airstrip, and from Task Force MATHEWS CP at DAK TO Base to 3d Bde, 101st Airborne Division at Dak To I.

(3) Upon deployment of HQ, 3d Bde, 101st Abn and 2 battalions to DAK PEK, a VHF relay and FM relay station were planned for. This was necessary because both the DAK TO Base and DAK PEK Special Forces Camps are virtually inaccessible to VHF and direct FM communications. On 29 May, FM relay was established with DAK PEK. The multi-channel systems, however, encountered many difficulties which included airlift of equipment, frequency problems, equipment problems, and non-line-of-sight-path.

### g. Psyop Support

(1) Psychological operations were conducted in conjunction with tactical operations to create dissatisfaction and desertion among NVA units.

(2) A total of 108 PSYOPS missions were flown in support of Task Force MATHEWS. These missions dropped 2,200,000 leaflets and made 140 hours of aerial loudspeaker broadcast. In addition, a total of 82 hours of live broadcast were made. Target areas were known and suspected enemy locations and infiltration - exfiltration routes.

(3) During the operation, three NVA soldiers rallied to US units. These individuals provided unit identifications, personalities and locations that were promptly exploited by PSYOPS teams. The CHIEU NOI wrote leaflets and made tapes urging their comrades to rally.

(4) All of the ralliers told that their reasons for rallying were B-52 strikes, suffering, and life in the jungle.

### h. Civic Action Support

(1) The civic action program already underway in AO SPAATZ was continued with efforts aimed at improvement of health, sanitation and living conditions.

(2) Eighteen villages in AO MATHEWS were selected for the Civic Action Program. A total of 154 visits were made, in addition to 1450 MEDCAP visits. A total of 5293 children participated in the Youth Health Program. Diagnostic examinations by the surgeons of both brigades were provided to approximately 182 people in villages in the AO.

### i. Chemical Support

#### (a) CS Operations:

(1) During the period Operation MATHEWS chemical operations consisted mainly of contamination of bunker complex using persistent CS-1.

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Assuming normal weather conditions for this time of year it is felt that this contamination should last for at least 6 months. It is estimated that more than 200 bunkers were contaminated using this method during the operation.

(2) The E-8 Tactical CS Launcher was used extensively on firebase perimeters during the operation. The E-8 was used on several occasions to assist in repelling NVA attacks on such installations. The 4th Division Chemical Section provided the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division with 60 E-8s. These items were used on defensive perimeters throughout their AO.

(3) A bulk CS drop was conducted north of CHEROKEE by USAF using C-130 aircraft and 500-800 found drums of CS. The purpose of this drop was to contaminate the NVA road which enters SVN vicinity of YB 893858.

(4) E-158 (XM-15) munitions and the newly developed BFOG (Box Full of Grenades) were used to prep LZs prior to combat assaults. In addition, the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry used the BFOG extensively throughout the operation.

(5) During the period of Operation MATTHEWS the following munitions were issued by the Division Chemical Section to units participating in the operation:

122 E-8 Tactical CS Launcher

50 Boxes of JEEPCS (2000 pounds)

12 E-158 (XM-15) Tactical CS Clusters

## 12. (C) RESULTS

a. Summary of enemy personnel and equipment losses.

(1) Personnel:

(a) NVA KIA - 352 (BC)

(b) NVA CIA - 7

(2) Weapons:

(a) Small Arms - 141

(b) Crew Served - 19

b. Summary of Friendly personnel losses.

UNIT	KIA	MIA	DEA	(NBI) (Non Battle)	TOTAL
HHCLst Bde		1			1
1-8 Inf	8	57		3	68
3-8		23	1	3	27
3-12 Inf	13	83			101
1-35 Inf	4	18			22
1-22 Inf	4	37			41
2-1 Cav	3	9			12
7-17 Cav					
DIVARTY	3	20			19
DISCO:					

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<u>A</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>(NBI) (Non Battle)</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Div Troops	2	3		1	6
4th Div Recap	37	246	1	7	291

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>(NBI) (Non Battle)</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
3-101 Abn					
1-506 Inf				1	1
2-506 Inf	1	13		7	21
3-187 Inf	1	15		3	19
2-319 Arty					
326 Engr				1	1
3-101 Recap	2	28		12	42
TOTAL	39	274	1	19	333

## 13. (C) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

### a. General.

(1) The concept of logistical support of Task Force M THEWS followed the previously established concept of logistical support of operation MACARTHUR. The battalions logistical bases were co-located with the brigade's trains at DAK TO. The 1st logistical Command Forward Support Activity (FSA) at DAK TO continued providing Class I, III, IIIA, V, barrier materials, bath, laundry, and graves registration to the units. Class II & IV materials, less barrier, were provided from CAMP ENARI through established supply channels. Organic elements from the Division Support Command (DISCOM) provided medical support, maintenance support, and a direct exchange for personal clothing.

(2) Resupply of forward company and battalion logistic bases was by UH-1D, CH-47 and CH-54 helicopters from the battalion logistical bases at DAK TO. Resupply of the FSA at DAK TO was primarily by overland convoy from PLEIKU Sub Area Command utilizing some of the Division's organic vehicles as augmentation.

(3) To continue the previous concept of providing supply point distribution as far forward as possible and also to provide an emergency resupply logistical base, a small resupply point consisting of Class I (C-Rations), III, and V was established at DAK PEX. Resupply of this area was CH-47, CH-54, C7A Caribou, and C-130 air drop. Due to restrictions placed on the use of CH-47 for resupply during the latter stages of the operation, another emergency resupply logistical base was established at DAK SEI. Resupply of this area was by C-130 air drop.

b. Material and Services: The majority of the supplies consumed during Operation MATHews were issued through the FSA at DAK TO. In order to provide the required logistical support, the previously established supply levels and objectives at the FSA had to be increased.

### (1) Supply summary for Operation MATHews.

#### (a) Class I: Meals Issued.

<u>ARATIONS</u>	<u>C RATIONS</u>	<u>SUMMARY</u>
151,826	81,192	1,385

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(b) Class III: Gallons issued:

<u>JP4</u>	<u>AVGAS</u>	<u>MOGAS</u>	<u>DIESEL</u>
595,826	48,500	120,500	148,800

(c) Class V: Tons issued: 3,343.89.

(e) Services.

(a) Laundry and Bath Services rendered during the period:

LAUNDRY - 24,200 lbs  
BATHS - 5,825 individuals

(b) Direct Exchange Point services for the operation were 1,000 sets of fatigues and 25 pairs of boots.

(c) Graves Registration service was provided by 1st Logistical Command through the FSA at DAK TO.

c. Maintenance.

(1) Forward support of Task Force MATHEWS was provided by Company C, 704th Maintenance Battalion operating from the brigade trains at DAK TO.

(2) Headquarters and Company A, 704th Maintenance Battalion provided back-up support for all units and a technical supply base for all units at CAMP ENARI. In addition, contact teams were augmented with personnel and equipment as required.

(3) During the operation, 330 work orders were processed for maintenance requests.

d. Medical Support.

(1) Company B, 4th Medical Battalion provided a forward clearing station at DAK TO in support of Task Force MATHEWS. The station consisted of approximately 40 personnel and provided an admission and disposition facility, a medical ward, one medical laboratory and communication ground evacuation, treatment and dental sections.

(2) The 4th Medical Battalion (-) provided medical service and manned the rear clearing station at CAMP ENARI. The 39th KJTeam provided necessary dental support.

(3) Army level supporting facilities consisted of the 18th Surgical and 71st Evacuation Hospitals located at PLEIKU.

(4) The 2d Platoon, 32d Medical Depot, located in QHI NHON, furnished medical supplies and maintenance support.

(5) Summary of medical services provided by the clearing section at DAK TO

(a) Patients seen: 1652  
IRHA 217  
INRHA 35  
Disease 187

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- (b) Patients evacuated: 424
- (c) Returned to Duty: 33
- (c) Patients seen but not admitted: 1213

e. Headquarters, Task Force MATHEWS was composed of the following personnel and supporting equipment:

- (1) Personnel: Officers 21  
Enlisted men 38  
TOTAL 59
- (2) Equipment:
  - (a) Tents: 3 GP medium and 6 GP small
  - (b) Light Sets: 3
  - (c) Generators: 3 (5 KW)  
1 (3 KW - DC)
  - (d) Vehicles: 9 (1/4 T)  
2 (2 1/2 T)  
3 (2 1/2 T VANS)
  - (e) Cots: 70
  - (f) Air mattresses 70
  - (g) Sleeping bags: 70
  - (h) Chair, folding: 25
  - (i) Tables, folding: 15

#### 14. (C) SPECIAL EQUIPMENT & TECHNIQUES.

a. A flash and radar Information Coordination Center was established by Division Artillery survey personnel which combined the information from visual observation posts and radar locations for target data.

b. Selected munitions were employed extensively on suitable targets during the period. Examples are:

(1) On 30 May, Hill 990 (YB 8124) received a ground attack. Firecracker was employed in and around the perimeter with nine (9) artillery batteries firing in support. A sweep on 31 May revealed 43 NVA KIA, 25 by artillery. Numerous blood trails and drag marks were also found in the area.

(2) On 1 June, an aerial observer sighted four 100mm field pieces in dug-in positions. Fire was adjusted resulting in 2 guns destroyed and a large secondary explosion. VR on 2 June revealed 4 NVA bodies still in the open. Fire tracks in the area indicated that the weapon and bodies had been recovered during the night.

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### (3) Firecracker expenditure:

<u>Caliber</u>	<u>Firecracker</u>
105	472 rds
155	126 rds
8"	5 rds

### 15. (c) LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### a. Operations

##### Item: Control of Army Aviation

Discussion: Operation MATHEWS utilized almost an entire CAB (Combat Aviation Battalion) on a daily basis and these assets were employed in an extremely large area of operations. The Task Force Aviation section had two (2) FM radios to control the Aviation elements during the day. The majority of aviation resources were provided by the 52d CAB and the 52d retained command of the aviation elements. This arrangement resulted in unacceptable response time to requirements that arose during the day. In addition the TF Aviation section was unable to function as a staff planner/coordinator because they were involved in minute-to-minute control of aircraft assets.

OBSERVATION: At a minimum, a forward CP of an aviation battalion is required to control aviation assets and effectively coordinate with the supported brigades. Additionally, this control element should be equipped with a MRC-119 (1 Ton) which would provide UF, VHF, ssb, and FM communications. This would permit the TF Aviation Section to function in a planning/coordination role and provide immediately responsive command and control of the aviation units supporting the TF.

##### Item: Massing Arc Lights

Discussion: Arc Lights were employed in mass for the first time in the Division Area of Operations and were closely coordinated with the scheme of maneuver and other fire support means. These strikes proved to be a major factor in the attrition of enemy forces and caused him to abandon his mission of overrunning friendly positions at DAK PEK and in the D.K TO-BEN HET areas. Although single Arc Lights had been planned on enemy targets previously, the grouping of several Arc Lights in one area and over short time spans created a devastating effect on the enemy.

Observation: When the enemy gives indications of massing for an attack, Arc Lights should be massed in order to gain maximum advantage of the strikes.

#### b. Logistics

##### Item: Need for Airmobile Bulldozers

Discussion: Tactical operations in the Central Highlands require frequent use of key terrain features for Fire Support Bases. The need to move heavy engineer construction equipment to isolated areas is apparent. High altitudes coupled with the monsoon season, reduces the lift capability of the CH-54 and restricts air transport of the D5A and D6B to the forward fire bases. The D6B with adapter kit is acceptable and would allow a payload reduction; however, the D6B with kit is not organic to the Division.

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Requests for this equipment are submitted to IFFV and further to the 18th Engineer Brigade.

Observation: Two D6B with adapter kit should be made an MTOE addition to 4th Engineer Battalion to increase responsiveness to tactical requirements.

HICKMAN  
BG

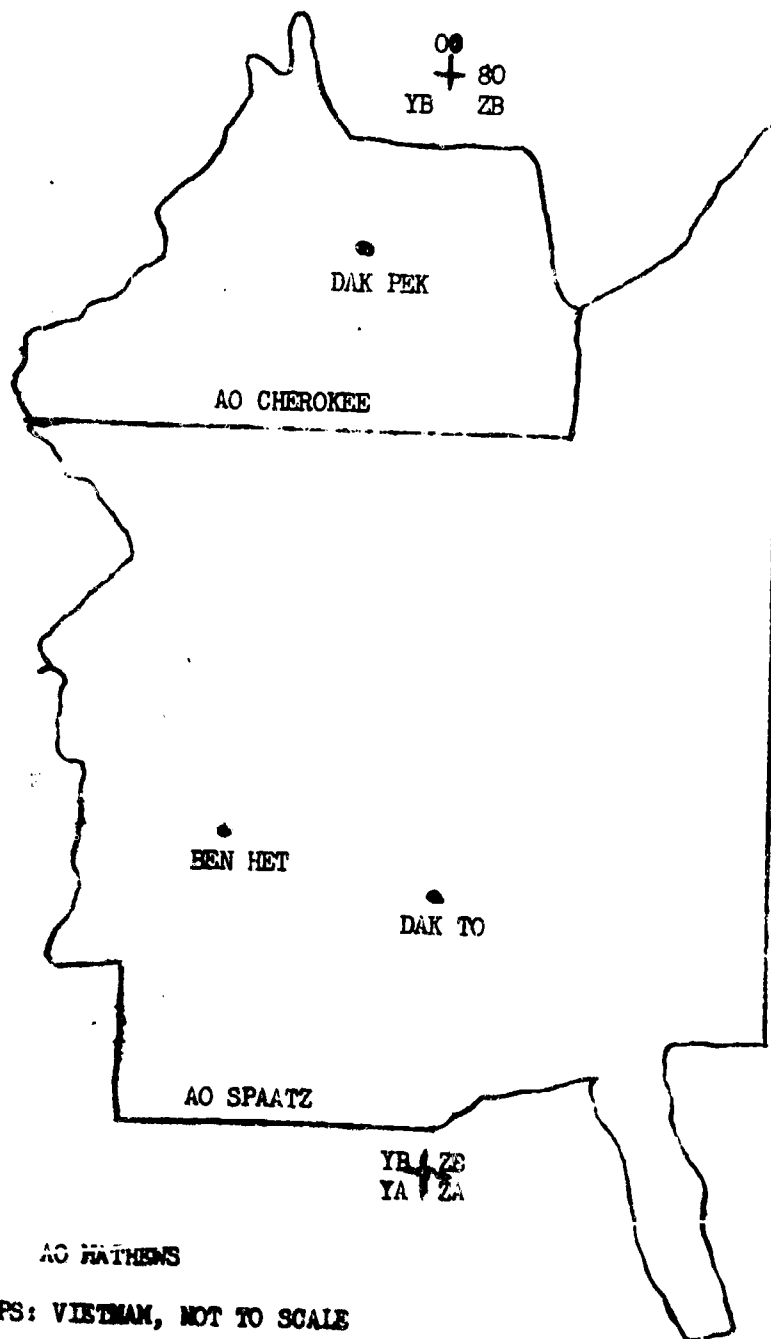
EDMONDS  
G3

TRUE COPY

*Preston W. Holtry*  
PRESTON W. HOLTRY  
CPT, Infantry  
Division Historian

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MAPS: VIETNAM, NOT TO SCALE

SHEETS: NO 48-4, 48-8, 49-1, 49-5

Inclosure 1

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**TASK ORGANIZATION:**

**1st Bde**

HHC, 1st Bde  
3-8 Inf  
3-12 Inf  
1-35 Inf  
A/4 Engr  
6-29 Arty (DS)  
C/4-42 Arty (DS)  
TACP

**3d Bde, 101st**

HHC, 3-101st  
1-506 Inf  
2-506 Inf  
3-187 Inf  
1-8 Inf (-)  
1-22 Inf  
C/2-1 Cav (+)  
2-319 Arty (DS)  
TACP

**TASK FORCE CONTROL**

HQ, TF MATHEWS  
B/6-14 Arty (GS)  
D/6-14 Arty (GS)

**Enclosure 2**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO San Francisco 96262

ATTN:DEL-GC

24 May 1968

SUBJECT: Letter of Instruction

Brig Gen Don R. Hickman  
Assistant Division Commander-A  
4th Infantry Division

1. You are designated Commander of Task Force Mathews effective 241800 May 1968.
2. Task Force Mathews will consist of your Task Force Headquarters and the following major units:
  - a. 1st Brigade 4th Infantry Division.
  - b. 3d Brigade 101st Airborne Division.
  - c. Attached artillery and other supporting units.
3. You will be the Tactical Commander of the designated forces and directly responsive to the undersigned. You are charged with the responsibility of conducting operations within your assigned area of operations as directed by this headquarters.
4. Your initial mission is to destroy the 325C NVA Division in accordance with OPOCD 11-68 Hq 4th Inf Div, dated 24 May. A collateral mission is to protect the Special Forces Camp at Ben Het and the 4th Division Base at Dak To. Additionally, you are charged with the logistical support of the DB 155 arty elements at Dak Pek.
5. Direct liaison and coordination with ARVN and other US agencies and forces not assigned to your OPOCD is authorized and directed.

Incl 3

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AVDDH-OC

24 May 1968

SUBJECT: Letter of Instruction

6. Requirement for additional resources will be submitted to this headquarters in sufficient time to permit timely allocation.
7. Existing rules of engagement and existing command relationships with USASF apply.

CHARLES P. STONE  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

A TRUE COPY

*Preston W. Holtry*  
PRESTON W. HOLTRY  
CPT, Infantry  
Division Historian

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## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

### OPERATION MATHEWS

- 24 May HQ, TF Mathews moved to Dak To and became operational at 242000H May 68. 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry FSB moved from YB 971267 (FSB #30) to YB 883291 (FSB #25) and 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry moved from Dak To Base (ZB 004217) to replace 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry at YB 971267 (FSB #30). 1-506 Infantry and 3d Brigade, 101st Abn Tac CP closed Dak To at 1525H. Upon arrival, HQ, 1st Battalion, 506 Infantry moved to YB 986153 (FSB #6) and assumed control of Rocket Ridge.
- 25 May At 1015 vic YB 892270, C/2-1 Cav made contact on Hwy 512, receiving SA and B40 fire. Gunships were on station. At 1820 contact was broken. Results: 3 US KIA, 6 US WIA, 47 NVA KIA. At 1630, Ben Het received 13 rds 82mm mortar from the west, landing outside their perimeter. At 1915 hrs, vic YB 839222, FSB #29 of 1st Battalion 8th Infantry began receiving 75 Recoilless and 82mm fire and at 2000 they were assaulted by an estimated NVA Battalion from the south and west. Fighting continued throughout the night. Spooky was employed and drew ground fire. The NVA attack penetrated the perimeter and the enemy still held 2 bunkers at 0445. Results: 14 US KIA, 55 WIA, 47 NVA KIA. PWs confirmed the 101st NVA Regiment of the 325C NVA Division conducted the attack. During the attack on FSB #29, two nearby FSBs were mortared, one of them with CS.
- 26 May At 0550, Dak To Base was attacked with 122mm rockets, however no casualties were inflicted. At 1335, FSB #29 (YB 839223) was still receiving 75mm Recoilless Rifle fire. 7-17 Air Cav observed the position and directed an airstrike on it. 3d Bde, 101st Abn Division closed Dak To at 1402 hrs, with a total of 122 sorties of C-130.
- 27 May At 0020, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry FSB #15 (YB 854187) received 6 rds of 82mm mortar fire. B&D Companies, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry and A, B, C and D Companies, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry conducted heliborn assaults to begin the attack northwest of Ben Het (YB 873257). At 1255 A Company, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry exchanged fire with 4-5 NVA at YB 872294 with negative results. At 1035 hrs at YB 814248, A Company, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry made contact with an unknown size enemy force. Results: 2 US WIA, 10 NVA KIA. At 1604, CSF Ben Het contacted an estimated NVA Company in bunkers. Tac Air and artillery were employed. 3d Brigade, 101st Abn was alerted at 2230 to move 2d Battalion 506th Infantry to Dak Pek (YB 953680).

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- 28 May At 0237, FSB #29 (YB 839223) received 20-22 rounds of mixed 60-82mm mortar fire that resulted in one US KIA and 2 WIA. At 0645, the advance party of 3d Bde, 101st Abn departed Dak To enroute to Dak Pek. B Company, 2d Battalion 506th Infantry began moving to Dak Pek at 0820 by CH-37 and C-7A. One section of 155mm Arty (A/1-92) and one 105mm (B/2-319) battery moved to Dak Pek and closed at 1120 hrs. At 1010 hrs, a FAC aircraft crashed at Dak Pek Airstrip due to power failure. The pilot was evacuated to Dak To. A, B, & C Companies 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry combat assaulted to YD 835280 to continue the attack northwest of Ben Het. Light contact was made near the LZ with an unknown size enemy force.
- 29 May At 0900, 1st Battalion 8th Infantry FSB #29 (YB 839223), received 6 rounds of 60mm mortar, all outside the perimeter. Airstrikes on the suspected mortar location produced a large secondary explosion. 3d Battalion, 187th Abn Infantry completed airlift to Dak Pek at 1215 hrs. At 1410, a squad from C Company, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry exchanged fire with an estimated NVA squad vic YB 928268. C Company reinforced the squad and employed Tac Air and artillery. HQ, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry moved from FSB #30 (YB 971267) to Dak To Base. They were replaced by one company, 23D ARVN Ranger Battalion. The move was complete at 1020 hrs.
- 30 May D Company, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry in their night defensive position on Hill 990 (YB 838247) began to be probed at 0230. By 0300 the company was receiving small arms and mortar fire in increasing intensity. At 0330 Spooky arrived to support the contact. At 0500, an estimated NVA battalion launched a ground assault from the north, south and west. Contact tapered off by 0530 but snipers continued to harass the position. Results: 7 US KIA, 56 WIA, 43 NVA KIA. Throughout the day, Hill 990 and 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry FSB #29 (YB 839223) received a total of 100 plus rounds mixed 120mm mortar, 105mm howitzer and 75mm Recoilless Rifle fire. A Company, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry was airlifted to Hill 990 to reinforce, however the NVA attempted to interdict the lift with 105mm and 75mm Recoilless Rifles. Reinforcement was completed at 311430 May. At 1240 hrs, D Company, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry outpost observed 4 NVA approaching their position. Results: 1 NVA KIA, 3 fled to the north.
- 31 May At 0012 - 0451 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry FSB #25 (YB 887291) received total of 17 rounds of 82mm mortar fire, all outside the perimeter. At 0247 A Company, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry located at FSB #5 (YB 945188) received 35 rounds 82mm mortar fire from the southwest, all of which landed outside the perimeter. From 0655-1043, Company D, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry on Hill 990 received approximately 12-15 rounds 82mm mortar fire, one round of which set off mortar ammunition that was stored in a bunker. Results: 11 US WIA. At 1800 vic YD 865178, an H-23 helicopter crash landed for unknown reasons. The crew was extracted at 1830 hours.

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- 1 June During the first lift of Company A, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry's combat assault to YB 791219, a UH-1H crashed into the LZ requiring elements be inserted into the alternate LZ. The crew was extracted with 1 individual injured. At YB 855268, Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry found two NVA bodies estimated to be two-three months old. At YB 886296, Company C, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry found one NVA body estimated to be one month old. At YB 876293, Companies B and D, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry captured one NVA who identified his unit to be the 18th Transportation Battalion, 101st Regiment, 325C NVA Division. Two Hoi Chanh walked into FSB #25 at YB 887291. One US was wounded from Company A, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry when FSB #29 (YB 839223) received 60 rounds of suspected 100mm artillery fire. At YB 828206, a patrol from Company B, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry exchanged small arms fire with seven NVA. The patrol withdrew and artillery was employed, while one US was wounded. At YB 841212, the Reconnaissance Platoon, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry found one NVA KIA estimated to be three days old. At 1421H, a Hoi Chanh walked into FSB #29, identifying his unit as 4th Battalion, 102d Regiment, 325C NVA Division. At YB 830193, the Aero-Rifle Platoon from Troop B, 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry recovered two US MIA from downed light observation helicopter of 24 May. Individuals were confirmed KIA. At the same location, the Aero Rifle Platoon observed ten NVA KIA estimated to be two-three days old. HQ, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry moved from Dak To base to FSB #12 (Ben Het) closing at 1405 hours.
- 2 June At YB 808278 Company A, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry Battalion received 25-30 rounds of 82mm mortar fire resulting in two US WIA. At YB 884303, Company B, 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry (Airborne) made contact with an NVA platoon in bunkers. The enemy employed small arms, automatic weapons, unknown type mortars, and 75mm recoilless rifles, wounding 11 US while ten NVA were killed. At YB 846221 the Reconnaissance Platoon from 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry found one NVA KIA with two B-41 rocket launchers and seven B-40 rockets. Later, the same Reconnaissance Platoon found one NVA killed by artillery at YB 847223. A patrol from Company A, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry found two NVA bodies at YB 839223. The CP of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn and the 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry (Abn) (-) moved from Dak Pek to Dak To Base, closing at 1750 hours.
- 3 June At YB 818299, the point element from Company D, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry received small arms fire from an estimated 12 individuals resulting in two US wounded. In the same area, Company D, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry found one NVA body in a grave. Long Range Patrol 1C found two NVA bodies killed by air or artillery. 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry moved their FSB from Dak To Base by convoy to FSB #13 (YB 919255).

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- 4 June A truck from the 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry struck a mine wounding one US at YB 886270. At ZA 208948 a north bound convoy was ambushed by an estimated NVA Company from the east and west side of Highway 14N. Troop C, 2d Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Company D, 2d Battalion, 8th Infantry and ten gunships from the 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry, 4th Aviation Battalion, and the 52d Aviation Battalion provided support. Air strikes were employed. One US was killed in the contact, eight US wounded, and 41 NVA were KIA. Companies A, B, and C, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry received a probe on their perimeter at YB 794274 by an estimated two NVA companies, killing three US, while 23 US were wounded. A sweep around the perimeter found a total of two NVA bodies. At YB 883303, Company A, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry found one NVA body at YB 883303. At YB 786271 Company B, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry engaged an estimated two company NVA force wounding four US. Company C, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry engaged five NVA and killed two at YB 883303. Company A, 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry, YB 935188, received 20 rounds of 122mm mortar fire, all of which landed outside the position. Counter mortar fire produced a secondary explosion at YB 942167. At 1915, an ambush from Company C, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry, YB 880303, ambushed 5 NVA, killing two NVA.
- 5 June At YB 801173, Companies B and D, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry received sporadic small arms fire resulting in one NVA KIA. The Reconnaissance Platoon from the 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry found two NVA bodies at YB 881292. Companies B & C, 3d Battalion 12th Infantry swept through an abandoned enemy bunker complex at YB 786271, the site of the 4 June contact. One NVA body, weapons, and supplies were found. Long Range Patrol H2A found one VC at ZA 086720 believed killed by Spooky. 2d Battalion, 42d ARVN found 2000 kg of rice at ZB 026279. 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry moved by air and convoy to Polei Klong (ZA 020935) and became OPCON 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.
- 6 June Company D, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry found one NVA body at YB 808304, and another at YB 808305. At YB 823222, the Reconnaissance Platoon from 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry captured one wounded NVA. Individual indicated his unit to be 23d Transportation Company, 2d Regiment, 325C NVA Division. At YB 785227, Companies B and C, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry found a total of 18 NVA bodies in graves. In the same area a hospital complex with four operating rooms was located. At YB 964786, Company A, 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry (Abn) found three damaged bulldozers. In the same area two US were wounded when an individual from Company A stepped on a mine.
- 7 June Troop D, 7th Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry killed three NVA at YB 782296. At YB 957243, two ARVN Rangers were killed when they detonated a baby trap which they had emplaced. Headhunter aircraft received .50 cal fire from YB 772268. At 1100, OMAA Team #52 made contact on an attempted insertion at YB 768303. The team was extracted and airstrikes were employed.

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- 8 June 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry relieved the 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry (Airborne) at Dak Pek. At ZD 170020, a northbound resupply convoy was ambushed by an estimated platoon size force. Troop B 2d Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment reacted to the contact with two platoons, while four gunships initially supported the friendly forces. One wounded NVA was captured and one NVA was killed, while friendly losses were three US KIA, and four US wounded. At YB 797296, Company D, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry found one NVA killed by artillery or airstrike. 3d Brigade 101st Airborne Advance Party departed Dak To by C-130 aircraft enroute to Phuc Vinh.
- 9 June 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry (Airborne) departed the Area of Operations enroute to Phuc Vinh. 3d Brigade CP and Company D, 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry also departed enroute to Phuc Vinh and closed at approximately 1830. 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry moved from FSB #13 (YB 906323) to Dak To Base and began preparation for redeployment.
- 10 June A reinforced NVA company employing small arms, automatic weapons, hand grenades and flame throwers initiated a ground attack on Company A, 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry located at YB 910677. The enemy breached the perimeter and occupied three bunkers. Company B remained in heavy contact until 0300, with artillery and Spooky supporting. One US was killed, 22 US wounded, and four NVA were KIA in the contact. 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry began moving to reinforce 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry at Dak Pek. Dak Pek Special Force Camp (YB 956686) received an estimated 12 rounds of 82mm mortar fire, coupled with a ground probe by an estimated enemy squad size force. Three CSF were wounded and one CSF was killed in the action. At 1140, Dak Pek Camp received one 122mm rocket which landed near the airstrip. Gunships fired on the suspected launch site and received heavy ground fire from YB 893693. Fire was returned and an airstrike was employed. 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry deployed by C-130 from Dak To to Phuc Vinh. The movement required 80 sorties and was completed at 1800.
- 11 June Three CSF were wounded at Dak Pek when the Special Forces Camp received 25 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. At YB 816247, the Reconnaissance Platoon, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry found one NVA body. At Dak Pek, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry received 10 rounds of 82mm mortar fire that impacted 2-300 meters east of the airfield. There were no casualties. Two rounds of 122mm rockets were also fired from YB 920694 and landed north of the airstrip.

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12 June At 1500H TF Mathews relinquished operational control of AO SPAAT2 and AO OBERONKEE to 1st Brigade 4th Infantry Division. At YB 893675 an airstrike was employed by a Forward Air Controller and Head Hunter aircraft, resulting in two NVA killed by air. Three US were wounded when a UH-1D helicopter received .50 caliber ground fire at YB 905714. Company A, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry received 32 rounds of 82mm mortar fire at YB 913713, killing two US and wounding three US. Between 1345-1410 Dak Pek received ten 122mm rockets on the airstrip. Cider 12 observed 6 rocket positions at YB 804735 that were occupied 2 positions were destroyed by airstrikes. Company A, 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry at Dak Pek had 2 US KIA by one 82mm mortar round. A patrol from Company A, 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry made contact with estimated 6 NVA at YB 805271. Results: 2 NVA KIA.

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TF MATHEWS  
Dak To, RVN  
261600 MAY 68

FRAGO 1-68 to OPORD 11-68 (Lucas Green)

**TASK ORGANIZATION:**

1st Bde

3/8 Inf  
3/12 Inf  
1/35 Inf (Att D-Day)  
6/29 Arty (DS)  
C, 4/42 Arty (DS)  
A Det, Ben Het CSF

3d Bde, 101st

1/506 Abn Inf  
2/506 Inf  
3/187 Abn Inf (-)  
1/22 Inf  
1/8 Inf (-) (Eff 270800 May)  
Plt, ARVN Ranger Bn  
C, 2/1 Cav (-)  
Plt, B, 2/1 Cav

1. (C) TF MATHEWS continues operations to destroy the 325C NVA Div and other enemy forces in AO MATHEWS by conducting a 3 battalion assault West, North and Southwest of Ben Het on D-Day followed by a battalion sized assault on D+1 and an exploitation assault c/a D+3.

2. (C) 1st Bde:

a. Secure Objective 1 (Hill 990) and Objective 3 (Hill 900) with simultaneous combat assaults on D-Day.

b. Establish liaison with A Det, Ben Het CSF Camp and coord CSF Opn to secure Hill 705 West of Ben Het CSF Camp beginning H+2 hrs.

c. Be prepared to secure Objective 2 on D+1.

d. Be prepared to secure Objective 4 on D+2.

e. Be prepared to release OPCON 1 Bn to 3d Bde, 101st for exploitation West of FSB #15.

3. (C) 3d Bde, 101st:

a. Secure Dak To, FSB's along Rte 512, and Bridge (FSB) 3.

b. Secure LLOC from Kontum to Dak To and Dak To West to FSB 13.

c. Secure Objective 5 (Hill 889 at YB 825152) on D-Day after completion of combat assault to Objective 1 by 1st Bde.

d. Be prepared to relieve/reinf 2/42d ARVN ME of Dak To.

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FRAGO 1-68 to OPORD 11-68 (Lucas Green) (Cont)

- e. Be prepared to relieve/reinforce Dak Seang and Dak Pek CSF Camps.
- f. Be prepared to receive 1 Bn, 1st Bde to exploit contacts West of FSB 15.
- g. Be prepared to release 2/506 Abn Inf to 1st Bde to secure Objective 4 o/a D+2.

4. (C) COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

- a. D-Day is 27 May.
- b. DIRIAUTH.
- c. Submit aviation requirements NLT 1700 hrs the day prior.
- d. Maneuver units will have helicopter air cover at all times while moving overland.
- e. Minimize radio traffic until H-Hour.
- f. AO in accordance with OPORD 11-68.

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TF MATHIEWS  
Dak To, RVN  
280030 MAY 68

FRAGO 2-68 to OPORD 11-68 (MATHIEWS)

1. Major NVA forces threaten USSF Camp at Dak Pek. TF Mathews continues operations in present AO, and airlifts Battalion Task Forces to AO CHEROKEE under OPCON 3d Bde, 101st.

2. 1/4:

- a. Cont pres mission.
- b. Assume AO of 3/101 effective 280100 May 68.
- c. Assume OPCON of 1-22 Inf, 1-506 Abn Inf, 3-187 Abn Inf and C/2-1 Cav effective 280100 May 68.
- d. Release 1-35 Inf effective 280600 May 68.
- e. Be prep to release 3-187 Abn Inf to 3/101.
- f. Be prep to assume OPCON of elements of 42d ARVN.

3. 3/101:

- a. Release 1-22 Inf, 1-506 Abn Inf, 3-187 Abn Inf (-) and C/2-1 Cav effective 280100 May 68.
- b. Assume OPCON 1-35 Inf effective 280600 May 68.
- c. Move to Dak Pek with 1 bn, assume OPCON of AO CHEROKEE and destroy en forces in area. Move 2d bn on order.
- d. Assume OPCON of USSF A Det, Dak Pek.
- e. Be prepared to assume OPCON of 2 MSF Co's on closure of MSF to Dak Pek.

4. COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS:

- a. Log buildup will be supported by USAF lift.
- b. AO CHEROKEE bounded by: ZB 1090, ZB 1055, ZB 55 grid line West to border, ZB 90 grid line West to border.



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FRAGO 2-68 to OPORD 11-68 (MATHENS) (Cont)

c. Operation Lucas Green renamed Operations MATHENS.

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TF MATHEWS  
Dak To, RVN  
022100 Jun 68

FRAGO 3-68 to OPORD 11-68 (MATHEWS)

1. Enemy threat Northwest of Ben Het CSF Camp continues while the threat to Dak Pek has been reduced. 1st NVA Div continues to threaten positions and installations in the Kontum area.

2. 1st Bde:

a. Phase I:

- (1) Assume OPCON 2/506 Abn Inf (-) upon closure Dak To on 2 Jun.
- (2) Cdt CA with 2/506 Abn Inf (-) on 3 Jun to secure Hill 1043 (YB 8832) and cdt RIF to NW and West.

b. Phase II:

- (1) Continue offensive operations West of Ben Het to engage and destroy the 325C NVA Division. Sweep draws and suspected base areas West of Ben Het.
- (2) Prepare to release 1/506 Abn Inf to 3/101st at 030600 Jun 68.
- (3) Prepare to move 1/35 Inf to Polei Kleng on 5 Jun and CHOP to 3d Bde, 4th Bde on closure.
- (4) Prepare to airlift 2 Co's, 1/22 Inf to Polei Kleng on 6 Jun.
- (5) Prepare to relieve 3/187 Abn Inf in Dak Pek with Bn (-2 Co's) o/a 8 Jun.

c. Phase III:

- (1) Relieve 3/101 on Rocket Ridge and assume control of 3/101 AO.
- (2) Secure FSB's 1, 3, 5, 6, 25, 29, and 30.
- (3) Protect Dak To and Dak Pek.
- (4) Cdt RIF ops within capability.

3. 3d Bde, 101st:

a. Phase I:

- (1) Release 2/506 Abn (Inf (-) to 1st Bde 2 June.
- (2) Protect Dak Pek with Bn Task Force.

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FRAGO 3-68 to OPORD 11-68 (MATHENS) (Cont)

b. Phase II:

- (1) Assume OPCON 1/506 Abn Inf 030600 June.
- (2) Coordinate operation along connecting boundaries with 42d ARVN Regt.
- (3) Prepare to receive 2/506 Abn Inf (-) o/a 8 Jun.
- (4) Prepare to extract 3/187 Abn Inf from Dak Pek.

c. Phase III:

Prepare to revert parent unit control o/a 8 Jun.

4. Coordinating Instruction:

Ops overlay (Annex A) effective 030600H Jun.

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TF MATHEWS  
Dak To, RVN  
080800 June 68

FRAGO 4-68 to OPORD 11-68 (MATHEWS)

1. TF MATHEWS continues to pursue NVA forces West of Ben Het and SW of Dak To and continues to protect Dak Pek with 1 Bn Task Force.

2. 1st Bde:

a. Cont present men of destroying units of 3250 NVA Div in AO.

b. Relieve 3/101st units in Dak Pek with Bn Task Force and assume OPCON AO CHEROKEE on 8 Jun. Protect Dak Pek and destroy enemy forces in AO CHEROKEE.

c. Exploit B-52 strikes vic FSB 28 with minimum force of 2 companies on 9 Jun.

d. Relieve 1/506 Abn Inf on FSB 5 and FSB 6 beginning 9 Jun.

e. Assume OPCON 3/101 AO vic Dak To on order.

f. Exploit B-52 strikes vic Hill 1043 (YB 7630) with battalion force on order.

3. 3d Bde, 101st:

a. Deploy from AO MATHEWS 9-11 Jun.

b. Release OPCON AO CHEROKEE to 1st Bde 8 Jun.

c. Release OPCON AO vic Dak To to 1st Bde on order.

d. Revert II Field Force control on departure Dak To.

4. COORDINATING INSTRUCTION:

Sortie schedule for departure 3/101st:

9 Jun - 50

10 Jun - 50

11 Jun - 14

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Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D		
(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)		
1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author)		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
HQ, OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310		CONFIDENTIAL
		2b. GROUP
		4
3. REPORT TITLE		
Combat After Action Report - Op MATHEWS, 4th Infantry Division		
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)		
Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 24 May - 12 June 1968		
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)		
CG, 4th Infantry Division		
6. REPORT DATE	7c. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES	7b. NO. OF REFS
13 June 1968	43	
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.	9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
	68X083	
9. PROJECT NO.	9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
N/A		
c.		
d.		
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT		
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY	
N/A	OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310	
13. ABSTRACT		

41

DD FORM 1473  
1 NOV 65

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Security Classification